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Air Force Briefs

AF helps rescue Army soldier

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — Air Force pilots and combat controllers played a part in the rescue of Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch during a mission into Nasiriyah.

Coalition special operations forces rescued Lynch who was held at the Saddam Hospital — a facility used by the regime as a military post — said Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, Central Command's deputy chief of operations, during a press conference in Qatar.

General Brooks said Army Rangers, Air Force pilots and combat controllers, Navy SEALs and Marines participated in the mission.

"It was a classic joint operation done by some of our nation's finest warriors who are dedicated to never leaving a comrade behind," he said.

Forces found mortars, ammunition, maps, terrain models and other equipment, making it clear Iraqi forces were using the hospital as a military headquarters.

PersCo information

Deployed members must ensure their Department of Defense Form 93, Emergency Data Card is updated. To make any changes or complete a new form, log on to www.afpc.randolph.af.mil, then click on the Virtual MPF icon and complete the data.

PersCo is equipped to handle personnel changes while members are deployed, such as reenlistments, assignments or updating the Serviceman's Group Life Insurance. The deployed PersCo unit can assist with completing these actions and coordinate with home station military personnel flights.

Call 6792, 6793, 6794 or 6795 for more information.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Tudor

Roadside assist?

Staff Sgt. Randy Simmons, Senior Airman Benjamin Davis, Senior Airman Steven Campos and Senior Airman Matthew Easton push a fresh B-52 Stratofortress tire toward its mount April 7 at this forward-deployed location. Two or three of the 500-pound tires get changed each day. The old tire is removed and then bled of its air. The new four-foot tall tire is then mounted in place. The whole process takes about 20 minutes for one tire.

Key issues dominate wartime leadership picture

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Tudor
457th Air Expeditionary Group
Public Affairs

Force protection, safety and operational security still dominate the sight picture of the group commander here as he continues to send B-52 bombers over Iraq and generate sorties.

Col. Dan Charchian emphasized this point recently to troops here deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. More than 1,000 troops and a dozen bombers are

stationed at this forward-deployed location generating firepower for the war.

As the sorties pile-up, there are still those three concerns at the top of his list. Colonel Charchian said it's important for his entire leadership circle to push them out to troops each day.

His goal? Meet the taskings handed down by war planners at higher headquarters.

"A lot of times we get asked 'What can

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OIF largest Special Ops effort since Vietnam

WASHINGTON- Operation Iraqi Freedom is supported by the largest special operations force since the Vietnam War, Defense Department officials said during a press briefing Monday.

While the vast majority of special operations forces are American, the United Kingdom and the Australian militaries are also providing "very capable" forces, officials said.

Army Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, vice chief of operations on the Joint Staff, said coalition land forces are consolidating their hold on what is now called Baghdad International Airport.

"They are more extensive in this campaign than any I have seen," General McChrystal said. "Probably as a percentage of effort, they are unprecedented for a war that also has a conventional part to it."

In northern Iraq there is a significant special operations presence, he said. Coalition personnel are working with Kurdish fighters against the regime.

Special operations personnel are helping achieve stability in the area.

They helped bring in the 173rd Airborne Brigade last week, and they are marking and calling in coalition air power on regime targets.



Special operations forces were also responsible for attacking a number of specific targets such as airfields, weapons of mass destruction sites, and command and control headquarters.

In the south, special operations personnel gave aid to conventional forces and did some of the work in the cities to help the Shi'ia elements.

When Operation Iraqi Freedom started, defense officials said "hundreds" of special operations forces were in country.

Two weeks into the operation the number has risen. The general did not give a ballpark figure for the manpower committed to operations, except to say "enough."

B-52 crews use 'smart-guided' cluster bomb

By Senior Master Sgt. Rick Burnham
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — Air Force B-52 Stratofortress crews made history April 2 when they dropped six sensor-fused cluster bombs on a column of Iraqi tanks headed south out of Baghdad.

The bombing runs resulted in the destruction of the tanks and marked the first time in history that CBU-105 Wind Corrected Munitions Dispensers have been used in combat, officials from the Combined Forces Air Component Command said.

The CBU-105 is a "smart-guided" cluster bomb. It disperses smaller bombs that sense the engine heat from armored vehicles and then fire downward to destroy them. In addition, it is equipped with wind-compensating technology that steers the munitions to precise targets by compensating for launch conditions, wind and adverse weather.

The historic bombing runs were part of a highly successful period of Operation Iraqi Freedom for coalition aircraft, one that Department of Defense officials lauded during an April 2 press briefing at the Pentagon. Army Maj. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, vice director of operations for the Joint Staff, said bombing of the Iraqi capital in recent days has been astounding, both in its precision and in its overall effect.

"The pounding that Baghdad has taken has been extraordinarily precise in its na-

ture," he said. "It has been nothing like what some people visualize as the destruction of a city. It is focused on regime-oriented targets and very carefully done. So certain things have been pounded, but only those are things that represent regime-oriented targets."

To illustrate that point, the general showed reporters video of a recent F-117A Nighthawk bombing run that used a precision-guided weapon to pummel a surface-to-air missile facility on the southwestern outskirts of Baghdad.

Coalition aircraft flew more than 1,000 sorties over Iraq on April 1, McChrystal said. The focus of air operations was on regime leadership targets, Republican Guard divisions and on countering missile threats, he added. Coalition forces have fired more than 700 cruise missiles and have dropped more than 10,000 precision-guided munitions since Operation Iraqi Freedom began.

Many of the recent missions have concentrated on Iraq's Republican Guard, he said, adding that those missions have made an everlasting impact on the "elite" forces of Saddam Hussein.

"It is somewhat unclear on the battlefield, because there has been reinforcement of the Medina and Baghdad sectors by some additional Republican Guard organizations," he said. "But I would say that the Medina and Baghdad divisions are no longer credible forces."

Coalition air effort runs gamut of missions

WASHINGTON — With their dazzling accuracy played out frequently for worldwide television audiences, precision-guided weapons have made media favorites out of strategic and tactical bombing missions.

But there is a wide variety of other air operations going on around the clock that are just as important to the war effort, said the combined forces air component commander of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

It has been a total effort, combining the resources of each service, as well as other nations participating in the war effort.

Lt. Gen. T. Michael Moseley, speaking to a group of Pentagon reporters via teleconference from his headquarters in Saudi Arabia Saturday, said the missions run the gamut from close-air support, to

airlift, to those involving unmanned vehicles and satellites.

"We are conducting operations across the spectrum, including strategic attack, counterair, interdiction, close-air support, mobility, intra- and intertheater airlift, and reconnaissance, all simultaneously," he said. "In the south, we have had such a rapid movement of surface forces that we've progressed straight from some strategic attack targets and interdiction targets straight to close air support. And now we are providing intratheater airlift because we are operating off a number of previously owned Iraqi airfields."

Those remote airfields are quickly becoming a home for an array of coalition aircraft, he added.

Ramstein unit sets up base in northern Iraq

By 1st Lt. Phillip Ulmer
86th Expeditionary Contingency
Response Group Public Affairs

NORTHERN IRAQ (USAFENS) — In direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, more than 200 members of the 86th Contingency Response Group recently deployed from Ramstein Air Base, Germany to an airfield in northern Iraq.

"We're here to secure and open the airfield, receive aircraft and support the 173rd Airborne Brigade," said Col. Steven Weart, 86th Expeditionary CRG commander. Following the unit's deployment, a special order created the 86th ECRG under the 484th Air Expeditionary Wing.

To complete this type of mission, the group relies on people from more than 40 different Air Force career fields, ranging from communications and security to medical and aircraft maintenance.

"We need this many different career fields in the ECRG because our mission is so diverse," said Master Sgt. Mario Ramos, 86th ECRG deployed first sergeant. "Most positions are only one or two deep, and everyone brings a critical skill to help complete the mission."

Outfitted in night vision goggles, forklift

drivers, crew chiefs and aerial port personnel exercise a carefully choreographed operation, marshalling aircraft and offloading more than a million pounds of cargo a night.

"This has never been done before," said Lt. Col. Mike Marra, 86th Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron commander under the ECRG. It normally takes about one hour and 45 minutes to download one C-17. Here, we're downloading two C-17s in 30 minutes in complete darkness."

While the mission here is critical to Operation Iraqi Freedom, one of the top concerns here is safety.

"While what we do is inherently dangerous, we use operational risk management to keep the risk to our people minimized," said Marra. "To date, we've downloaded 6 million pounds of cargo, everything is getting done on time and no one's been injured."

The 86th Contingency Response Group, based out of Ramstein Air Base, is one of three highly mobile, rapid response units in the Air Force designed to deploy anywhere around the globe at a moments notice. The group specializes in airlift command and control, mobile aerial port operations, force protection, forward area medical operations, humanitarian aid operations, communications, and more.

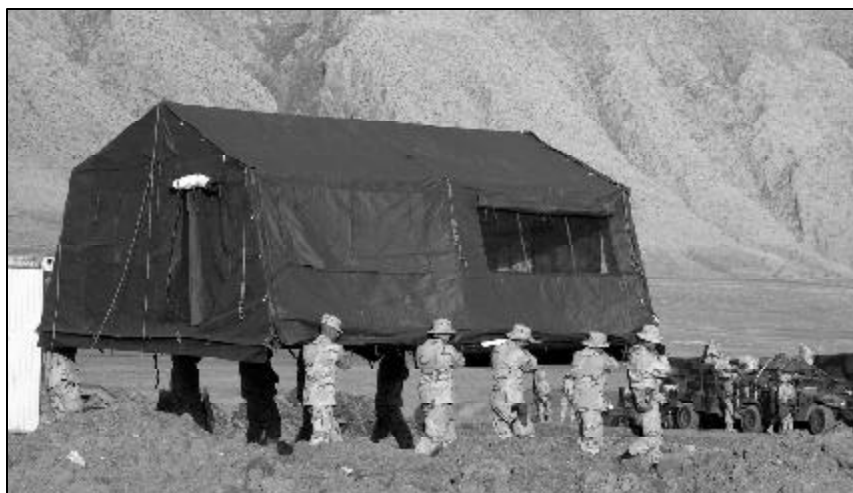


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Rich Puckett

Members of the 86th Expeditionary Contingency Response Group team up to move living quarters to a newly prepared tent city site at a forward deployed location in northern Iraq. The unit, deployed from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, is tasked to secure and open the airfield, receive aircraft and support the 173rd Airborne Brigade from Vicenza, Italy.

Personnel data system upgrade smooth

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) — One week before the end of March, in the middle of a war, the military personnel data system underwent a major database upgrade — and nobody noticed.

"After some of the things we've gone through that made MilPDS almost a four-letter word throughout the Air Force, this is an important accomplishment," said Col. Anna Rivers, director of personnel data systems at the Air Force Personnel Center here.

"It was a quiet behind-the-scenes victory," said Maj. Gen. Tom O'Riordan, center commander. "Our folks did a huge amount of work getting ready for this so that everyone in the field wouldn't have to skip a beat, and we were very sensitive that Air Force people are busy fighting a war."

"This is just what we want — a personnel data system that seamlessly and reliably acts as the backbone for the Air Force," he said.

The general said success will be measured when field commanders' attitude toward the system is "benign indifference," when they do not have to think about it and instead can focus on their mission.

"We're one step closer to that," he said.

"Without this and future upgrades, all we might have left, after bringing MilPDS online, is an instant 'legacy' system," Colonel Rivers said.

Upgrades are necessary to avoid having the new system become obsolete before it is even two years old, "which is what we faced without an upgrade," she said.

The "last sigh of relief" came after making it through the heavy end-of-the-month transaction period "without a hitch," despite major updates including pay and promotions, officials said.

What was different this time from the launch of MilPDS in June 2001 was better teamwork and more deliberate testing, Colonel Rivers said.

"We ran thousands of tests before making the database changes, and we were confident of success," she said. "Otherwise, we wouldn't have gone ahead with it in the first place."



Photo by Airman 1st Class Stacia Willis

Gas and go

Staff Sergeant Andrew Poole and Senior Airman Nathan Davis, crew chiefs from Minot Air Force Base, N.D. secure a fuel hose underneath a B-52 Stratofortress enabling the fuels specialist to "top off" the tank before the jet pursues its next mission.

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you do?" he said, referring to the capabilities of the B-52 Stratofortress. "Our goal is to meet the taskings safely and on time."

This quest hasn't come without a price. Before the group beefed up its security with more than 500 Air Force cops, augmentees and local police forces, the base suffered numerous break-ins by protestors. However, with the new troops in place, incidents are down significantly. The dictum: no one touches the airplanes unless authorized.

"Every augmentee here is genuinely excited to do his job," Colonel Charchian said, who has canvassed the flight line for feedback. "They feel like their part of a team."

Meanwhile, he bolstered his safety edge. Wartime can bring its share of "blue on blue"

causalities. Colonel Charchian and his team are working to minimize those incidents. Everyone wears a reflective belt after dark and everyone has a "safety stake" building bombs, fixing jets and turning sorties.

"If we didn't do those things and something happened, I don't know how I could ever face a mother and father to explain it," Colonel Charchian said. "We must put safety in the forefront."

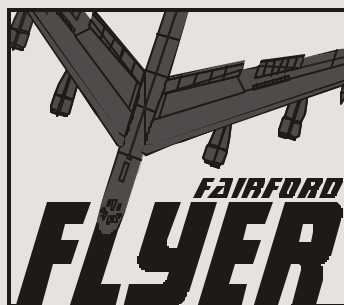
Operational security rounds out Colonel Charchian's chief concerns. While he believes his team is doing a great job, he wanted to ensure everyone understood the consequences discussing sensitive or secret information in the wrong environment.

"This is a very dynamic environment,"

the colonel said. "We have to be able to know when and where to discuss or transmit that kind of information. Simply put, if we don't do operational security the right way, people will die. We cannot let that happen."

Colonel Charchian is proud of his team's record so far — only one sortie lost due to heavy fog. He's also watched the 457th Air Expeditionary Group form with few safety incidents. All in all, he said it's a great record so far.

"We have a fantastic team here. It's committed to accomplishing all the things our senior leaders have asked us to do," he said. "We're getting it done safely, securely and on time. Those kinds of things help me sleep well at night."



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Built with care and sent off to war, their makers hope they never return...

NOT FINDING A WAY HOME

By Staff Sgt. Kristina Barrett
*457th Air Expeditionary Group
Public Affairs*

They descended on Fairford with one focus in mind; building bombs. Not just any bombs. They wanted to build the kind that won't come back. It's the lifeblood of any Ammo troop.

At first, they didn't build for two weeks, just long enough for them to get antsy, wondering when they'd get their chance. They conducted normal, and to them, mundane, operations until they could build. Being in Ammo isn't about paperwork.

It's about building things that go "BOOM."

Once the word came down, the crews hunkered down, braved the weather and started building, and they haven't stopped yet. They haven't stopped because the bombs they're building haven't come back.

For Ammo troops there's nothing worse than building a bomb and then taking it apart to go back into the stockpile. "Watching an aircraft come back empty is the ultimate in job satisfaction," said Master Sgt. Stephen Sims. "We build, they bomb – that's the mission and the mission wouldn't happen if it wasn't for our bombs."

Sims' office is the build pad, where every bomb starts its life, and his job title is production supervisor but everyone calls him the "Pad Dad." The Pad Dad controls everything happening, from safety to munitions control. The build pad is where the squadron's hard work comes together, culminating into the reason for their being and producing what they've been training for.

For each Ammo airmen, training is very much a part of the daily grind in the bomb dump. Many hours are needed to conduct a successful wartime mission. "If we're not deployed, we're training to deploy," said 1st Lt. Francisco Vega, munitions flight commander.

Part of that training is preparing to deploy, which isn't restricted to what happens on the build pad. It starts at home.

"Our main concern was getting families ready, letting them know what to expect and informing them of what was available

to them while their spouse was deployed, especially services offered by the family support center," said the lieutenant, who is on his first deployment. "Those who had deployed before shared their experiences and tips on how to handle separation."

Taking care of the families is what Lieutenant Vega believes makes a successful deployment.

"If our people are worried about how their family members are doing, they won't be focused on the job. We want to give them a sense of security."

Many airmen here, as well as their families, have already felt the sting of separation that deployment brings.

"We've been getting hit hard," said Master Sgt. J.C. Riggs, talking about the unit's deployments to other bomber forward-operating locations. Riggs is on his second rotation in one year.

Sergeant Sims and Lieutenant Vega both agree it isn't a hard sell to get Ammo troops to hit the road.

"Most Ammo troops are already motivated anyway so it wasn't a problem when we knew we were going to deploy again," Sergeant Sims said.

Not all of the airmen on the build pad are "to-the-bone" Ammo troops. Airman 1st Class Jason Hodge is a missile maintenance troop augmented to Ammo.

"I volunteered to be augmented because, in my career field we don't get to be a part of conflicts like this," he explained. "I wanted to do something different for a while. I'm glad I volunteered because it's great to see those B-52s go. I feel like I'm a part of their mission."

Being part of the mission is what it's all about to these Ammo troops, according to Ammo's top dog.

"Here we get to see of the results of our builds. At Minot, we build training (inert) assets," said Chief Master Sgt. Ricky Quattlebaum, munitions flight chief. "When inert assets are dropped, all you get is a big thud. The bomb is buried in the ground. Sometimes we do build live assets and we do get feedback, but the



Photo by Staff Sgt. Kristina Barrett

Senior Airman Josh Vader, 5th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron Munitions Flight, prepares an MK-84 "dumb bomb" for transition to a GBU-31 Joint Direct Attack Munition "smart bomb."

purpose and effects aren't the same.

"We like to think our job is one of the most important. We're part of a large team that contributes to the success of a larger team," he continued. "Seeing the empty racks and getting a thumbs up from the pilots is one of the most enjoyable and successful feelings an Ammo troop can have. Our job, responsibility to the success of this operation, is extremely important. If we do not build correctly, bombs do not function correctly, and the mission is a failure."

As the building continues, spirits remain high. Every Buff that returns from a mission and taxis by the build pad is greeted by Ammo troops welcoming them home. Flight crews are rewarded with noises of a job well done, as well as a large flag waving proudly over the pad. These airmen know a successful mission because the aircraft's wings are empty. The bombs – their bombs – aren't coming back. Mission complete.

Weather clears skies for pilots

By 1st Lt. Rickardo Bodden
457th Air Expeditionary Group
Public Affairs

As much as accurate bombs, jet-propelled missiles and well-trained crews mean the difference in a war, none of it gets off the ground without good weather.

As aircrews and others at this forward-deployed location will tell you, weather is paramount for the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom. No one knows that better than Staff. Sgt. Mike Wimmer, mission execution forecaster for the 457th Air Expeditionary Group and its compliment of more than a dozen B-52 bombers. Wimmer simply loves his job.

"I believe that after a firefighter, I have the best job in the Air Force" he said with a big smile.

At the base weather support center, staffed with one meteorologist and four mission-execution forecasters, one of his main tasks is to provide weather updates to air traffic control, the combined information center and to transient aircraft. This is done so no matter whether an aircraft is leaving or coming, the crews are aware of the current weather conditions.

The weather flight is responsible for issuing local weather observations. Every 15 minutes, a forecaster walks outside and looks at the sky and checks visibility. He

must note any changes about the weather he sees.

He then inputs the information into a database. Once complete, anyone in the world can read and use the information.

Sergeant Wimmer said his job is important to the war effort.

"It's paramount here," he said. "It's critical whether a mission goes or doesn't go.

"I do love my job. It has been nothing but a fun ride for the last 12 years," said Wimmer. "When the pilots come in and say 'thank you, your weather was on target' is what I like to hear." That gives him a tremendous sense of accomplishment. "Three months of a contingency operations makes up for five years of practice" Sergeant Wimmer said.

Senior Airman Mellissa Capestro is another forecaster with the flight. She said she understands how her forecasts could affect the outcome of a mission. A self-confessed science nut and weather buff, she said she enjoys being close to the mission.

"You feel included," she said. "It gives me a great sense of pride."

It's not just the job that keeps Sergeant Wimmer excited. Each day he sees the end-product of his work liftoff carrying the hopes of an oppressed society on its wings.

"Being next to the runway when the



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Fisher

Staff Sgt. Mike Wimmer reads a visibility chart.

first Buff took off and knowing our weather shop made an impact on their ability to conduct a mission is a huge highlight," Sergeant Wimmer said. "It's rewarding seeing all your hard work and practice payoff watching that Buff take off and gear up, knowing something good will come out of it."

Contracting: takin' care of business

By Maj. Laurent Fox
457th Air Expeditionary Group
Public Affairs

Imagine having a credit card and being told to shop 'til you drop. That's the job of Tech. Sgt. Mike Hogan, contingency contracting officer for the 457th Air Expeditionary Group. Sergeant Hogan, deployed from RAF Alconbury, has been maxxing the credit card for weeks now and sees no end in sight.

The contracting process can be complicated to the layman.

It begins with a request form completed by the customer. He researches for possible vendors and once he's found the best fit, he makes the purchase, notifies the customer and follows it to delivery.

While deployed, the contracting

process is sped up due to the urgency and need of deploying commanders.

Many of the restrictions normally encountered aren't applicable in the deployed environment, according to Sergeant Hogan.

His job is to provide immediate purchase support to the deployed commander. He provides on-scene consultation and tries to tailor products to fit the needs of his client.

Sergeant Hogan said there's a sense of satisfaction seeing the customer receive the product they need for their job. "It feels good to see that I have helped in many aspects of the mission such as where people are sleeping, eating, and how they are completing their jobs more efficiently."

There are different hurtles airmen

experience working from a deployed location. For him, that includes multitudes of people requiring immediate assistance.

"I currently have about 15 bosses, each with a different priority," he said.

Sergeant Hogan's ordered a wide variety of items so far. They range from wireless telephones to concertina wire.

"Sergeant Hogan has been putting in a Herculean effort since getting here. It's no wonder that he was selected as the best Contracting officer in USAFE (United States Air Forces in Europe). He's that good" said Col. Daniel Charchian, 457th Air Expeditionary Group Commander.

The bottom line is that, if you are sleeping a sound sleep, eating a good meal and working more efficiently in your job, contracting made it happen behind the scenes.

Dining Facility

Today: Lunch — beef and corn pie and ribeye steak; Dinner — Pineapple chicken and Yankee pot roast.

Saturday: Lunch — baked chicken and Swedish meatballs; Dinner — barbecue chicken and Hungarian goulash.

Sunday: Lunch — Cantonese spare ribs and fried fish; Dinner — loin steak and spinach lasagna.

Monday: Lunch — pot roast and roast pork; Dinner — spaghetti and fried chicken.

Tuesday: Lunch — Teryaki chicken and veal parmesan; Dinner — meatloaf and Turkey ala King.

Wednesday: Lunch — turkey and noodles and beef ball Stroganoff; Dinner — barbecue spare ribs and stuffed pork chops.

Thursday: Lunch — baked chicken and fried catfish; Dinner — italian sausage and lasagna.

Hours
Breakfast
4-8 a.m.
Lunch
11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Dinner
4:30-8 p.m.
Midnight Meal
11 p.m.-1 a.m.
Flight kitchen and ground support meals available 24 hours.

Movie Schedule

Two Weeks Notice

Rated PG-13 8 p.m. Saturday

Pinocchio

Rated PG-13 3 p.m. Sunday



Photo by Airman 1st Class Stacia Willis

Take a peek

Captain Steven, deployed pilot from Minot Air Force Base, N.D., checks his night vision equipment to ensure proper operation.

Hours & Days

Barber Shop: Open 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; open 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday.

Base Exchange: Open 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday-Friday; open 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday; 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday.

Beauty Salon: Open 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday.

Bowling Center: Open 7 a.m.-11 p.m. every day; the snack bar serves breakfast from 7-9 a.m. and lunch/dinner from 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m.

Chapel: Mass, 5:30 p.m., Saturday; Protestant Sunday school, 9 a.m. Sunday; Protestant Sunday service, 10 a.m.; ladies Bible study, noon, Monday; men's Bible study, noon, Wednesday; and Alcoholics Anonymous, 7:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday.

Commissary: Open 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Wednesday and Saturday.

Community Activities Center: Computer lab with internet and e-mail access and DSN phone lines available 8 a.m. -midnight Monday - Friday and noon to midnight week-

ends. Office open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays; lunch line open 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Monday-Friday; the Outback Bar is open 4 p.m. - midnight every day and serves microwavable snacks and cold sandwiches; TGIF starts at 4 p.m., Friday. The CAC also has games and DVDs available for check out.

Family Services Center: video teleconference appointments are available, call 4605 or 4887 between 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Long distance morale calls need a control number. For a control number, bring a copy of orders to the family services center in Building 3.

Fitness Center: 24 hours.

Library: Open 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday. Computers available for e-mail and DVDs and videos available for check-out.

Shuttle Schedule: The shuttle runs every 30 minutes. Stops include Stirling House, commissary, dining facility, main gate, base exchange, community activities center, base headquarters, transportation, Building 1202 and portakabin city.

Buffs of a different kind

Local club enjoys aviation art

By Roger Markson
Manchester Aviation Art Society

Greetings from the Manchester Aviation Art Society to the airmen of the United States Air Force based at R.A.F. Fairford. We are very proud of you and the magnificent effort you are currently mounting in the war against Saddam Hussein.

Our society has approximately fifty members and was founded at the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry twenty years ago. Many of our members are former servicemen and women and some are also former and current British Aerospace employees. For all of us, aircraft and the love of flying is something in the blood that is very deeply ingrained.

The paintings that we produce cover all aspects and periods of aviation, although it is World War II that remains the most popular period amongst the general public. The most popular British aircraft of all are the "Spitfire" fighter and "Lancaster" bomber and of the American types, the Boeing B-17 bomber and P-51 Mustang fighter. Modern jets do figure in our output and there are plenty of F-15s, F-16s and of course the magnificent B-52, arguably the greatest military aircraft of all time.

Aviation art includes paintings that are



Courtesy photos

B-17 of the 379th Bomb Group by Ron Leigh, oils on canvas.

oils on canvas (exactly the same as old masters in art galleries) as well as newer media such as acrylic paint (essentially a plastic) poster paint, pencil sketches, scraper board (a technique still taught in American schools) and many more. The style and type of art is therefore amazingly wide. Some pictures are "super realistic" and show every rivet detail of the aircraft's structure. Others are much more impressionistic and convey the feeling of speed or dramatic action. This is especially true of course where air to air combat is shown, but of course not all

aviation art is military. Civil flying is also very popular especially if it has a nostalgia angle to it, reminding people of when flying was both fun and an adventure; not just a bus ride!

The Manchester Aviation Art Society maintains links with the British Guild of Aviation Artists and the American Society of Aviation Artists. Thanks to the development of the Internet it is extremely easy and fast to maintain communications with our American friends. We all have Web sites and from time to time members meet up both in the U.S.A. and in Britain both socially and to attend exhibitions of aviation art. Thus aviation art plays a part in cementing the common bonds between British and American enthusiasts of this art.

In the meantime, if anyone would like to visit us here in Manchester if they are travelling to the north of England on furlough, we meet at the Museum of Science and Industry, Castlefield, central Manchester, on the first Tuesday of the month 19:00 to 21:30. The science museum itself is well worth a visit and is so large that it will take a whole afternoon to see, so allow time for that.

Needless to say if anyone who reads this article is already "dabbling" in aviation art as a "casual pastime" we should be extremely interested to hear from him or her. For further information e-mail me at roger.markman@virgin.net.



"Fortress Sunset" by Terry Farimond, B-17 Bomber, oils on art board.